

Message Text

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PAGE 01 REYKJA 00421 251900Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 OES-06
EPA-01 CEQ-01 L-03 /065 W
-----260740Z 108111 /10

R 251641Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7128
INFO COMICEDEFOR
CINCLANT

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MARR, IC, US
SUBJECT: PRESS AGITATION OVER IDF REFUSE DISPOSAL

REF: REYKJAVIK 413 DTG 251205Z MAR 77.

1. DISPOSAL AT SEA BY ICELAND DEFENSE FORCE OF ACCUMULATION
OF EXPENDED "INITIATOR DEVICES" USED TO EJECT SONABUOYS
FROM ANTI-SUBMARINE AIRCRAFT HAS PRODUCED WEEK-LONG FUROR
IN LOCAL PRESS.

2. DUMPING TOOK PLACE MARCH 17 AT COMMON OFFSHORE DISPOSAL
SITE. ALTHOUGH DEVICES CONSIDERED HARMLESS IN EXPENDED
STATE BY IDF, DECISION HAD BEEN MADE TO DISPOSE OF THEM
AT SEA ON OFF CHANCE THAT ANY REMAINED UNFIRED. SENSATION-
SEEKING AFTERNOON PAPER DAGBLADID GOT WIND OF INCIDENT
WHEN CONTAINERS MARKED "EXPLOSIVES", IN WHICH DEVICES WERE
TRANSPORTED, WERE SIGHTED ON TRUCKS PASSING THROUGH TOWN
OF KEFLAVIK ENROUTE TO DOCKS. PAPER RAN FRONT PAGE STORY
MARCH 18 ON ALLEGED MYSTERIOUS DUMPING BY BASE.
PEOPLES ALLIANCE DAILY THJODVILJINN QUICKLY PICKED UP
STORY, AND BOTH PAPERS HAVE HAMMERED AT IT EVERY DAY
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SINCE.

3. PAPERS' CRITICISM HAS FOCUSED MAINLY ON FACT THAT
IDF DID NOT OBTAIN ALL GOI CLEARANCES NECESSARY TO
CARRY OUT DISPOSAL. (RESPONSIBLE ICELANDIC AUTHORITIES ACKNOW-
LEDGED PUBLICLY THAT PERMISSION PROBABLY WOULD HAVE
BEEN GRANTED IF PROPERLY REQUESTED.) HOWEVER, ALLE-

GATIONS HAVE ALSO BEEN MADE THAT DUMPED DEVICES ARE NOT WHAT THEY ARE CLAIMED TO BE AND, IN FACT, MAY BE OF AN EXPLOSIVE OR TOXIC NATURE. IN THIS VEIN, DABBLADID, IN MARCH 22 EDITORIAL, CASTIGATED GOI FOR ITS "GULLIBILITY" VIS-A-VIS USG, DRAWING PARALLEL BETWEEN IDF ASSURANCES THAT INITIATOR DEVICES WERE HARMLESS AND PURPORTED US AFFIRMATIONS TO GOI IN PAST THAT THERE WERE NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS STORED AT KEFLAVIK.

4. IN FACE OF INTENSE PRESS ATTENTION, GOI REQUESTED REPORT FROM BASE ON MATTER MARCH 21. SAME DAY, ISSUE WAS RAISED IN ALTHING BY PEOPLES ALLIANCE MP. FONMIN AGUSTSSON AND JUSTICEMIN JOHANNESSEN RESPONDED THAT NEITHER OF THEIR MINISTRIES HAD BEEN OFFICIALLY INFORMED OF DUMPING AND THAT REPORT FROM BASE HAD BEEN REQUESTED. THIS DOCUMENT, STRESSING HARMLESSNESS OF DEVICES AND FACT THAT DISPOSAL SITE WAS COMMONLY USED FOR DUMPING PURPOSES BY ICELANDERS, WAS DELIVERED TO GOI MARCH 22. A SAMPLE OF DEVICE IN QUESTION WAS ALSO PROVIDED TO UNDERScore ITS BASICALLY HARMLESS NATURE. THERE HAVE BEEN NO FURTHER OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIONS ON MATTER SINCE THEN ALTHOUGH, AS NOTED, PRESS CONTINUES TO DWELL ON IT.

5. COMMENT: US-MANNED DEFENSE FORCE IS, OF COURSE, FAIR AND FREQUENT GAME FOR ICELANDIC PRESS. DAGBLADID, WHICH IS FIGHTING FIERCE CIRCULATION BATTLE, AND THOD-VILJINN, FOR IDEOLOGICAL REASONS, ARE USUALLY IN FOREFRONT OF BASE CRITICS. HOWEVER, CURRENT CASE ALSO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNFORTUNATELY COINCIDES WITH WAVE OF CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC CONCERN HERE OVER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN GENERAL (POLLUTION FROM ALUMINUM PLANT AND OTHER SOURCES, ETC.). DUMPING STORIES, THEREFORE, HAVE BEEN LONGER-LIVED AND PERHAPS HAVE HAD GREATER IMPACT THAN IS CASE WITH RUN-OF-MILL ARTICLES ON BASE. MOREOVER, DAGBLADID HAS PROLONGED PRESS PLAY BY USING ISSUE OF DISPOSAL OF INITIATOR DEVICES AS CONVENIENT JUMPING OFF POINT FOR FEATURE ATTACKING OVERALL WASTE DISPOSAL PRACTICES AT BASE AS DETRIMENTAL TO LOCAL ENVIRONMENT.
BLAKE

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